

Wabash Reflections



News presented by the Wabash River Heritage Corridor Commission (WRHCC).

As the weather turns, so do our minds: to river clean-ups, hiking, Earth & Arbor Day. Yep, its time to shed the skates & skis and return to the outdoors in our shirtsleeves. Whether your idea of spring is fishing or Earth Day, there's a lot waiting for you on the Wabash River. We've got a few items – some history, some recreation and a whole lot of celebration – to whet your spring appetite:

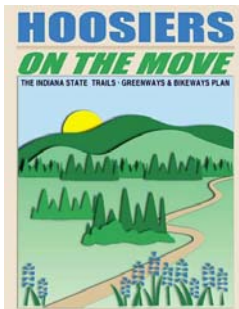
- ❖ The FIRST ever Indiana Rivers Rally takes shape (on the Wabash, of course).
- ❖ The Biggest & Best: Hoosier Hiking Trails get a Plan!
- ❖ The Wabash's Return to Health in Vermillion County
- ❖ Notes and Quotes: Wabash Art moves to Minnetrista! Last stop before sale.

Indiana Rivers Rally Takes Shape – Scholarship deadline extended!

A small trickle, when joined by other freshets, becomes a river. A small group, John Gettinger (WRHCC president/chair) knew, when joined with other like-minded individuals, would become a Rally – the first Indiana Rivers Rally! Every river should have its attendees to this open gathering (June 7 – 9, 2007 in West Lafayette) and every attendee will find something of interest. Applications for up to \$100 awards towards the conference fees are now going to be accepted all the way up to the event. Registration, by the way, is set to open this week (of note, as some field trips are limited)! Mark your calendar and spend a day or two with precious resources – Indiana's rivers, the Wabash, and the people who love them all! See you there!



Hoosiers on The Move: A State Trail Plan Arrives. By Steve Morris, DNR alternate designee river commissioner, Wabash River Heritage Corridor Commission



By now you should have all seen or at least heard of *Hoosiers on the Move*, the new state trails, greenways and bikeways plan. The ultimate goal of the plan is to make trail opportunities available within 15 minutes or 7.5 miles of every Hoosier. *Hoosiers on the Move* covers all types of trail related uses including paddling, boating, hiking, walking, skiing, bicycling, mountain biking, horseback riding, and motorized off-road vehicle riding. Special emphasis is placed upon developing a visionary system of connected trails and bikeways totaling over 2000 miles!

Hoosiers on the Move was developed through a steering committee of trail-concerned agencies and organizations. To get public input, an exciting trail plan ‘summit,’ attended by over 350 people, was hosted by Governor Mitch Daniels. Additional public review was garnered through five open houses hosted by the DNR. Finally, information about the plan was made available through a display at the Indiana State Fair and numerous follow-up calls from trail enthusiasts.

The plan which has resulted, though today incorporating merely broad corridors and general orientations, lays the groundwork for ultimate final alignments based on a closer look at feasibility and local public needs and support. It incorporates a proposed state visionary trail system which (despite some color highlighting on the map at page 15) includes the American Discovery Trail. Trail mapping that did not become part of the visionary system is retained as suggested opportunities for local or regional development, including the making of a connection from the North Country National Scenic Trail to the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail, via an expanded Wabash Heritage Trail, as well as many other connections. Though not currently a part of the visionary trails, these local and regional trails may ultimately create a true recreational trail network conveniently connecting everywhere in Indiana to the national trail system.

Action began on the plan even while the plan was being finalized for print. Ray Irvin, INDOT Director of Greenways & Bikeways, has been taking a close look at the proposed visionary trail corridors. Ray is evaluating these corridors’ planning status, land acquisition needs, public support, special infrastructure needs, etc. Ray’s evaluation will give us a better idea of how to proceed with state assistance in developing the visionary system. The link between the state visionary corridors and some road right-of-ways is clear, as travel from and to populated areas is one goal of a trail system; a goal in common with existing roadways. Wherever this is the case, we will look to include a trail or bikeway development as part of road improvements.

At the trail plan summit, Governor Daniels committed to additional funding for trails and the source for this funding should be disclosed soon. Although the visionary trails system will certainly have a certain funding priority for the state, we also recognize the value of supporting development of other high value local projects not necessarily associated with the visionary system. I expect the state will attempt to find an appropriate balance between assistance aimed at developing the visionary system and assistance to other worthy local projects.

One thing for sure, the state will need to focus on projects that have strong public support and are in a position to be developed as quickly as possible. It is crucial for local organizations to proceed with all phases of trail development. State level staff has only been increased by one at this point; the hiring of Ray Irvin. Trail enthusiasts cannot bank on the state driving Indiana trail development. While the state may be awakening to its greater role in future trail development, the staff resources necessary are definitely not in place at this time.

Hoosiers on the Move has ambitious goals. It, and Governor Mitch Daniels support for trail development, has inspired us all. The bar has been raised. We must all, however, put forth renewed effort to make the goals of *Hoosiers on the Move* a reality.

The trail plan is available on the web at <http://www.in.gov/dnr/outdoor/planning/trailsplan/>.

The Wabash in Vermillion County a personal reflection by Diann McIntosh, river commissioner alternate for Vermillion County

Vermillion County, the county nobody wanted, borders Illinois on the west, Vigo County to the south, and Warren County to the north and to the east we find the beautiful Wabash River. The Wabash River and its tributaries is the core of much of Vermillion County history, both factual and folk lore. I maintain its reflection today is returning to its historical past!

I have lived close to the river since 1971 and have seen it go through many changes. Every change from almost total contamination to slowly returning to a clear and beautiful water way; scored by eagles, dotted with ducks and geese, and home to beavers. These and more have returned to the Wabash.

I have traveled the Wabash to north of Attica and south to Terre Haute, with my home base in Newport. Several of my forays have been two or three day trips, camping on the many sandbars for which the Wabash is famous. To the patient observer, most of the sandbars yield fossils and, occasionally, even an Indian artifact. The fishing is great, too.

To local fishermen, the thought of promoting the Wabash as a recreation resource is kind of scary. What they truly fear, however, are rude people, trash, and the thoughtless operation of watercraft. These hallmarks of the 'ugly' tourist make them shudder. Considerate, respectful people, quiet and understanding around the fishing public, are welcome. Of course, that also means take your trash home. The use of common sense on any waterway goes a long way towards maintaining safe and inviting waters; keeping it clean for all to enjoy.

A few years back, my friend Jim and I started traveling all around the United States. Our goal was to find a piece of property right on water. There were none to be found in our own area that spoke to us, so we settled for camping on the Wabash (our first love). By the time we progressed from a tent to a motor home (we are both getting old), though we were still taking our boat to the river a lot, we were just camping on occasion. Though neither of us had net fished, in 2004 we bought a hoop net and gave it a shot. We caught a few that first year with a 32-pounder being the tops. In 2005 we started staying at the river most of the time and had our net in the water as soon as the spring flood was gone. On Father's Day we took my father (82 yrs. young) to dinner and then for a surprise trip on the Wabash to run our net; something he had never done. We landed an almost 80lb Flathead. It was the best. Then, two weeks later, came the real fish story. The net was so heavy (I'm not much help when it comes to lifting; steady and moral support are my job) we managed to pull in 4 Flatheads, one 80 lbs., one 50 lbs. and two 42-pounders all in one net! Talk about excited and out of breath.

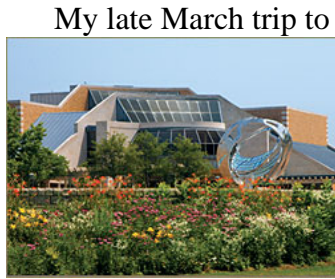


To finish off our wonderful season we found a property on the Big Vermillion River, a tributary to the Wabash, complete with a cabin and shower house left from its past use as a camp. We opened the campground back up and added a small canoe rental. We're still net fishing, with a 60-pounder our largest since 2005, and hope to have the float to the Wabash 'opened' as early as

this year. Our goal is to share what Jim and I both love and to provide people with a chance to catch nature at its best. No matter what, however, you can bet the Wabash is still making history for those that love her!

More Vermillion County info is at: <http://www.in.gov/mylocal/counties/vermillion/> or you can get census-type data at http://www.city-data.com/county/Vermillion_County-IN.html.

Notes & Quotes (from Executive Director Ron James):



My late March trip to “River Odyssey: Two Artists Follow the Wabash” at Muncie’s Minnetrista Cultural Center, brought to mind the varied ways each of us do our part to save what we know of this world. Traveling on a gray day through a landscape already soaked to overflowing, water seemed more of a burden than a pleasure. But just one glance around the over two hundred gathered people cured that feeling. Here was a throng waiting patiently in line to see this storied collection of river-centric work. Here was a crowd attentively listening as the two humble artists discussed their eighteen-year saga. Of course, the real push has come over the past 6 years as the professional landscape painters David Dale, Muncie, and Jim Faulkner, Yorktown, sketched and painted subjects along the entire course of the Wabash River. Scraping the plan for 25 works each, these artists journeyed through the 28 counties in 4 states touched by the Wabash River while creating over a hundred paintings & works, most with custom-made frames that are art in their own right.

These paintings and works of the world connected to the Wabash River, its fishing, its shopping, its cities, towns, farms, fields and wilderness, are on view together for their last time. At its close at Minnetrista on June 24th, a material part of the exhibition will travel to Wickliff & Assoc. Auctioneers for sale. Sold at auction on August 25th, a portion of the proceeds will be donated to support worthy projects of the Wabash River Heritage Corridor Commission.



Some of watercolorist and sculptor Jim Faulkner contributions to the show may be viewed on the web at http://www.faulknerartist.com/River_Odyssey/River_Odyssey_Paintings_Index.htm while many of David Dale’s oils and pastels, but unfortunately not the frames, may be found at http://daviddalefineart.com/River_Odyssey/River_Odyssey_Paintings.htm. So, whether you see them at Minnetrista or not, start saving now to buy a work at the auction and save something of the Wabash!

And don’t miss the Corridor-sponsored Central Indiana Land Trust “Preserving Nature” art beginning this month in Indianapolis (on the 14th). For more information on that show, check out:



See you on the river!